



Ecclesiastes 9:11-18

Life and circumstances are unpredictable

Ability brings no assurance of accomplishment (9:11-12)

¹¹ Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all. ¹² For man does not know his time. Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so the children of man are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them.

- We've all seen people with great skill, talent, and gifting not experience success
- *“under the sun”* - meaningless, vaporous, and empty life on earth
- *“race is not to the swift”* - those blessed with speed and endurance don't always win the race
- *“nor the battle to the strong”* - nations with a formidable military force are defeated in battle
- *“nor bread to the wise”* - many very intelligent people have gone hungry for a variety of reasons
- *“nor riches to the intelligent”* - simple people with practical ideas have become more wealthy than people with higher IQ's and more education
- *“nor favor to those with knowledge”* - various influences can bring the favor of people to an inferior position

Ability brings no assurance of accomplishment (9:11-12)

- “*but time and chance happen to them all*” - a conclusion Solomon offers from a man-centered perspective that does not see life’s experiences attached to God’s direction and purpose, and therefore they are empty and meaningless (“*time and chance*”)
 - All things are by God’s design and all things are to be done and experienced with the glory of the Lord as our central focus
 - 1 Corinthians 10:31
 - Colossians 3:17
 - Our focus is not to be on predicting outcomes and achievements according to perceived ability
- We are to do what we determine is Scripturally best and we do it to the glory of God
- We affirm God’s handiwork in all of life
 - Ephesians 1:11
- We reject the “*Que Sara, Sara*” (Whatever will be, will be) sense of abandonment to fate
- We believe in a Sovereign God who determines all things for His glory and ultimately our good

Ability brings no assurance of accomplishment (9:11-12)

- *“For man does not know his time.”* - people cannot predict success and people cannot predict the time of their death
- *“Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so the children of man are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them.”*
 - Unsuspecting fish are taken away by a fisherman’s net
 - Hunters set traps to catch birds when they are seeking to feed
 - The day of death takes the lives of men and women when they are unprepared
 - *“evil”* - what makes it bad is that it is a cessation of present activity

Wisdom can come from unimpressive people, but it may not be honored (9:13-16)

¹³ I have also seen this example of wisdom under the sun, and it seemed great to me. ¹⁴ There was a little city with few men in it, and a great king came against it and besieged it, building great siegeworks against it. ¹⁵ But there was found in it a poor, wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that poor man.

- Solomon now presents a display of wisdom that was impressive to him
- *“under the sun”* - something Solomon saw during his life on earth that stood out
- Solomon witnessed a small city and a powerful king laid siege to it
 - The city is destined to be brought to its knees by a powerful kingdom
 - Verse 11 - *“nor the battle to the strong”*

Wisdom can come from unimpressive people, but it may not be honored (9:13-16)

- During the siege, a poor man in the city develops a plan that brings deliverance to the city
- “*Yet no one remembered that poor man.*” - such an incredible display of wisdom is quickly forgotten because it came from a poor man of little account
 - The wisdom shown does not bring honor to the man because he was poor
 - Wisdom from humble and unimpressive people is easily overlooked
 - What man overlooks, God honors
 - Let us be faithful to serve the Lord and honor God for the wisdom He supplies and blesses
 - 1 Samuel 16:7

Wisdom can come from unimpressive people, but it may not be honored (9:13-16)

¹⁶ But I say that wisdom is better than might, though the poor man's wisdom is despised and his words are not heard.

- Solomon says that wisdom that is ignored, because it didn't come from a "credible source," is still wisdom
- Eternity will reveal many wise opinions that were ignored because people were blinded by what they deem credible
- ***Stupidity runs in packs***
 - Romans 12:2
 - Ephesians 5:6-11
- We should seek to honor wisdom even if it comes in an unimpressive package

The voice of wisdom isn't always the loudest, but it has great power (9:17-18)

17 The words of the wise heard in quiet are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools.

- He who shouts that loudest does not always have the best argument!
- Passion is not as important as biblical perception
 - Thank God for wise people who are willing to prayerfully deliberate rather than simply react
 - It is sad when a ruler or a leader wants to be followed not because he is right, but because he is a ruler or a leader
 - Proverbs 26:12
 - Proverbs 29:20

The voice of wisdom isn't always the loudest, but it has great power (9:17-18)

¹⁸ Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

- Wisdom is essential to making solid advancements
- Wisdom is wonderfully powerful, but a loose cannon is very destructive
 - James 3:5-10
- Where is the root and foundation of your wisdom?
- It is found in Jesus Christ and His gospel grace
 - 1 Corinthians 1:18-24

Questions to Consider

- How are you battling feelings of futility and emptiness?
- Since ability is no guarantee of success, how can you live worshipfully amid frustrations and disappointments?
- Do you evaluate those with wisdom from a worldly or a God-centered point of view?
- Are you more impressed with passion or with biblical perception?
- Why is gospel wisdom in Christ critical for possessing and perceiving wisdom?



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